



Casino and Museum: Representing Mashantucket Pequot Identity

John J. Bodinger de Uriarte

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The past twenty-five years have seen enormous changes in Native America. One of the most profound expressions of change has been within the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. The Nation has overcome significant hurdles to establish itself as a potent cultural and economic force highlighted by the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center and Foxwoods, the largest casino in the Western Hemisphere. In *Casino and Museum*, John J. Bodinger de Uriarte sees these two main commercial structures of the reservation as mutually supporting industries generating both material and symbolic capital.

To some degree, both institutions offer Native representations yet create different strategies for attracting and engaging visitors. While the casino is crucial as an economic generator, the museum has an important role as the space for authentic Mashantucket Pequot images and narratives. The book's focus is on how the casino and the museum successfully deploy different strategies to take control of the tribe's identity, image, and cultural agency.

Photographs in the book provide a view of Mashantucket, allowing the reader to study the spaces of the book's central arguments. They are a key methodology of the project and offer a non-textual opportunity to navigate the sites as well as one finely focused way to work through the representation and formation of the Native American photographic subject—the powerful popular imagining of Native Americans. *Casino and Museum* presents a unique understanding of the prodigious role that representation plays in the contemporary poetics and politics of Native America. It is essential reading for scholars of Native American studies, museum studies, cultural studies, and photography.

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